

Opening Remarks

Chair, Board of Directors
Institute of Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)
Akio Morishima

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to thank you for coming all this way on a weekday.

We do not particularly mind but the name of our foundation, the Institute of Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) contains the word "strategy" and our research aims at making policy proposals. Our institute began six years ago in 1998 as an initiative of the Japanese government. The Kansai Research Centre was opened three years ago in 2001 in Kobe under a unified theme of "Business and the Environment", with the support of the Hyogo Prefecture and business world of Kansai area. This is the fourth annual international symposium since the Kansai Research Centre opened. On the theme of "Prospective Directions of Sustainable Society - Roles and Possibilities of Industry, Technology and Community", we will first be hearing presentations by Dr. Peter Harper and Prof. Ryoichi Yamamoto followed by a panel discussion with our invited panelists.

I would like to talk briefly about why IGES was founded and "Business and the Environment" was selected as the theme of the Kansai Research Centre.

Needless to say, global environmental problems, particularly global warming, are major issues of the 21st century. Asia in particular is faced with global environmental problems what with rapid industrial and economic development and growing populations in China, India and other places, global warming and other problems, and poverty still an issue in many developing nations. Since it is urgent that global environmental problems in Asia be resolved, the Japanese government created IGES in 1998 to develop strategies for doing this after the Rio Summit of 1992. Currently, several projects are underway in cooperation with researchers and institutes of international, especially of Asia. The headquarters are in Hayama, Kanagawa. The Kansai Research Centre was opened three years later, in 2001 in Hyogo, and just before that, another office was opened in Kitakyushu. At present,

there is also an office in Bangkok, which is working with the local UNEP office, ESCAP and the various nations of Asia in identifying problems and devising strategies.

Moreover, the economy and industry of the Kansai, needless to say, play an important role in the Japanese economy. In launching the Kansai Research Centre, tremendous support was provided by the business world of the Kansai. Therefore, as the theme, it seemed suitable to research the roles played by primary factors of sustainable development, namely "economics" or "industry", and the "environment". It was decided to put the search for "business and environmental" strategies at the core of the Kansai Research Centre, on the belief that sustainable technologies, business systems and concepts found within the industrial technologies and systems of Japan could be shared not only with Asia but developing nations everywhere. Today's International Symposium on "Business and the Environment" is a part of that.

Recently, the concept of sustainable consumption appeared in UN circles. I believe Dr. Harper and Prof. Yamamoto will be talking about this today, but mankind will not survive unless we do something to efficiently and effectively use limited energies and resources. The Kansai Research Centre wants to think about this problem, too. Of course, other IGES projects such as the Climate Policy Project that researches global warming, the Freshwater Resources Management Project, and the Urban Environmental Management Project underway in Kitakyushu, will delve into this problem, as well.

The Kansai Research Centre focuses the core theme on "business" and searches for directions in sustainable development. Our guest speakers and panelists today are all doing leading research in this field, therefore I expect there will be much to learn despite the limited amount of time. I hope this symposium serves as a good opportunity to think about the kind of lifestyle needed now for the next generation of the entire world, including not only Asia, but Europe and the USA.

Before closing, let me express my gratitude to Dr. Harper, Prof. Yamamoto and all of our panelists who have traveled so far to be here today. I am very grateful for your presence. I expect the discussions today will prove very meaningful. Please, everyone, expect the same. Thank you very much.

Opening Remarks

Director General, Environment Bureau,
Hyogo Prefectural Government
Akira Harada

Ladies and gentlemen, as you just heard me introduced, I am Akira Harada of the Hyogo Prefecture Environment Bureau. On behalf of Hyogo Prefecture, let me welcome everyone to Hyogo and this International Symposium on "Business and the Environment" organized by IGES.

As you may well aware, dealing with global warming and the formation of a sound material-cycle society are urgent issues of environmental administration today. In regards to global warming, Hyogo Prefecture is comprehensively promoting action with the "Plan for Promoting the Prevention of Global Warming" devised in 1996 and later revised in July 2000. Also, in order to promote energy conservation and new energy sources, Hyogo Prefecture is promoting action, which includes new hardware, in all governmental offices. Just to give you an example, we have been installing solar panels in governmental offices across the prefecture since 2002. In fact, the largest solar panels in scale to be installed in any governmental office in all Japan were in Nishiharima Office of the Hyogo Prefectural Government, which is now generating 506 kilowatts of power. The second ones were installed in our main office and those are generating 209 kilowatts of power.

As for the formation of a sound material-cycle society, Hyogo Prefecture drafted "Hyogo Vision for a Sound Material-Cycle Society" in May 2001, based on Japan's "The Basic Law for Establishing the Sound Material-Cycle Society". In order to develop a sustainable society, harmony between the environment and business has been raised as a specific target and we are thus promoting strategies for developing the eco business.

One of those strategies is to build wide-area recycle centers. In that regard, we adopted the "Hyogo Eco Town Scheme" in March 2003 and are currently building a system that will enable industry, government and the academics to act as one. While many other eco town schemes target specific industrial areas, ours aims at

material recycling, eco business promotion and urban development that involves the participation of all residents in Hyogo Prefecture.

I believe we can safely say that the current society and economy of mass production, mass consumption and mass disposal have reached the point that we need to convert them to a sustainable ones. Given the situation, it is very significant and opportune that the IGES Kansai Research Centre has turned their attention to local community models and business models, and launched projects with the prospects of finding directions in sustainability. The IGES Kansai Research Centre is involved in policy research for the Asian-Pacific region, but I would like to see them operate additionally as an advisor to local communities as well.

It is my sincere hope that the Business and Sustainable Society Projects proceeds on track and ultimately contribute to the formation of a sustainable society in the Kansai area, Japan and other corners of the Asian-Pacific region.

Thanks you for your attention.